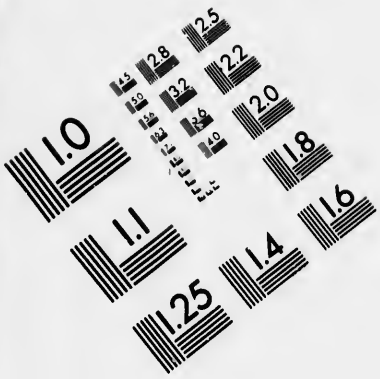

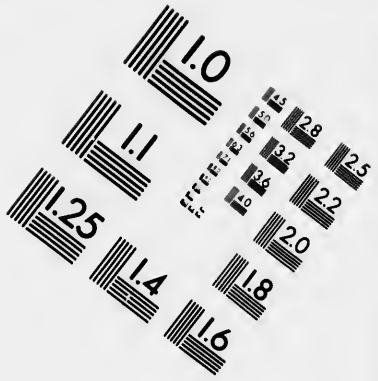

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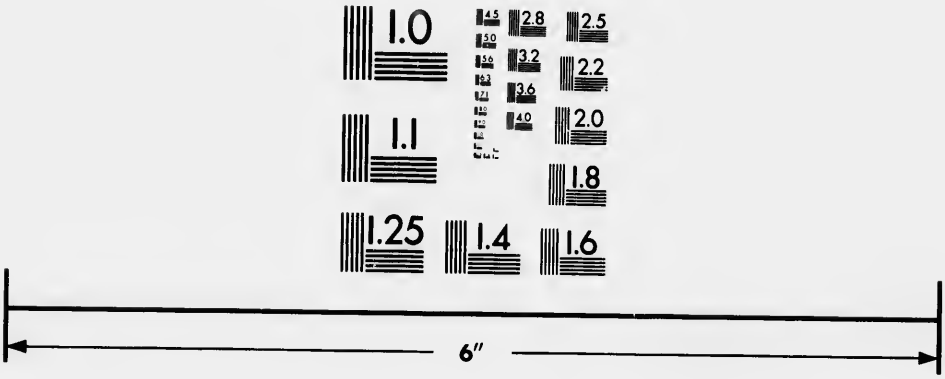

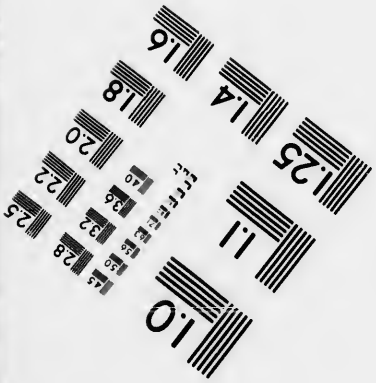

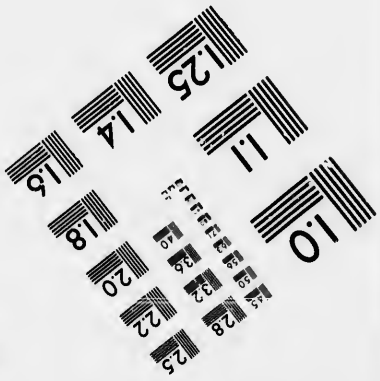

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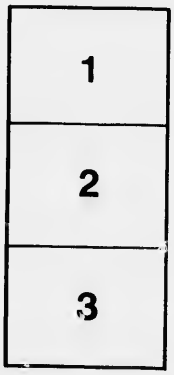

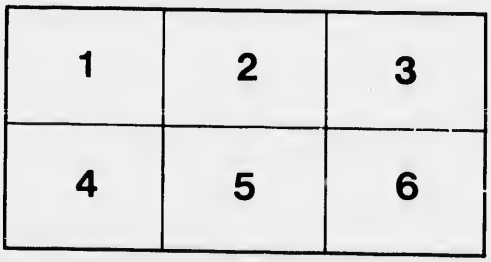

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11.

POPE BOOTH

THE SALVATION ARMY

A·D·1950

POPE BOOTH.

His Motto: "*Do as you are told, and don't argufy.*"

PROLOGUE.

IT was a strange procession of men and women going by—the like of which I had never seen before. The scene: the Thames Embankment. The month: October of the year of grace, one thousand eight hundred and ninety, and rather a foggy day.

The men were mostly attired in a uniform, a compound of the water-side character, the fireman, and the hotel messenger. The women wore bonnets like half-closed, semi-circular sun-blinds, such as we see abroad, and dresses of dark material, sack-shaped and drawn in a little at the waist. Many wore white sashes, a welcome relief to their sombre attire. A fair proportion carried tambourines, which they rattled and flourished with energy and glee.

Anon, as the vast procession glided by, came a weird, grey-headed man, seated in a carriage, who bowed in response to a mixture of cheering, hooting, and laughter—the cheering, let me hasten to declare, predominating.

"Who is he?" I asked of a stranger at my elbow.

"The General," he replied; "he buries his wife to-day, and—"

I heard no more, thanks to the rush of a gang of ruffians on pocket-picking bent. When the wave of confusion arising from this cause had in a measure subsided, a coffin covered with flowers on a simple carriage was borne along, and I judged that it contained all that was left of the General's wife.

Coming from a far-off, lone land, I could not understand this scene. Honour is shown to dead warriors; but their wives die and are borne quietly to the grave. And why should the General bow and smile? Why should he seem to rejoice at *her* death? Why—

And so I speculated, wandering away until I reached the railway-station, and there I bought a magazine which reviews the reviewers, doubtless little to the taste of those who at one time sat undisputed judges of all things literary. Within it was the story of the "General" and his departed wife.

An amazing story. A great and good work being done by great and good people. Alone in my chamber I read it closely, seeing naught but brave work in what had been done until I came to the General's motto, "*Do as you are told and don't argufy*," and then I paused to think.

No harm, but much good, might come of it *now*; but, anon, when some ruler, less wise and just than he, should be at the head of this vast and growing body—what then?

And I thought and thought of the possibilities arising in the future, and I was thinking of them still when the sun went down.

CHAPTER I.

THE ARMY PREVAILS.

"This is the day appointed for the King to pay homage to Pope Booth the Third."

I heard these words as I stood in a wide street of a great city. Near me stood two white-haired men in seedy, threadbare black attire. One, methought, looked like a bishop on whom parlous times had fallen.

It was he who spoke, as I could tell by the answer given by the other.

"Yes; it is so," he said. "Albert Victor the Second can hold out no longer. He must yield to the arrogant demands of the head of the all-pervading Army. My brother, we must not whisper a word against it lest we be hanged or burned as heretics."

"We are the last of the bishops," returned the other, bitterly. "All the others are dead, or have recanted and become officers in the Army. Hark! the roll of drums and the rattling of tambourines. The red-jerseyed men and the Hallelujah lasses are escorting the King to his humiliation."

"Will they pass this way?"

"They must do so."

"Then let us, my brother, choose a convenient door-step from whence we may safely view the saddening sight."

But the other demurred, and, pleading an engagement elsewhere, disappeared.

The remaining man, looking about him, soon found a suitable place for espying the coming procession in the doorway of a closed shop, which I judged by the sign overhead had once been occupied by a tobacconist. It was now in a state of semi-ruin.

There was ample room for two, and, urged by curiosity, I joined the old man in the doorway. He looked at me suspiciously, but, apparently relieved by my appearance, gave vent to a soft sigh and said—

"You are not one of them?"

"No," I replied, "nor do I know whom you mean."

"The Salvation Army," he replied, shortly, "under command of Pope Booth the Third. Surely you have heard of *him?*"

In a confused way I seemed to have some knowledge of the name, but, not fully recalling it, I was silent. Without waiting for a reply my companion went on—

"He is ruler of this land. All nations will soon be under the hoofs of his followers, who joyfully give him blind obedience or profess to do so. Some, I fear, are pliant for their private ends. Three generations ago the Army was started to regenerate the people. It is now employed to keep them in captivity."

"How?" I asked.

"By the compact voting power of the Army. It votes to a man as its Head dictates. The Parliament and its offices, all places of importance and power, are filled by its followers. Prisons, places of refuge, schools, all municipal governments are in their hands."

Some of the men carried banners.

"What of the army and navy?"

"Both are employed in fighting nations, who have been branded by the Pope as heretical."

"And the church—*your* church?"

"Shattered twenty years ago, now only existing here and there in fragments and in secret. So with all forms of faith but that originated by the Prophet Booth."

"The *Prophet* Booth?"

"Yes; so he is now called, although *he* laid no claim to the title. Stead, sixty years ago, declared him to be on a level with the Prophets, and pronounced his Army to be the greatest movement in the religious world since the time of the Apostles. So it was, perhaps, in the first Booth's time, but those who came after him have grown like unto the old Popes of Rome. The lust of temporal power has laid hold of them."

"But how came it," I asked, "that the people allowed themselves to be thus enslaved?"

"The creed of the Salvationists swept over the land like a huge tidal wave," replied my companion; "it carried all things before it. The strong and weak were borne away on the foam-crested sea. No man, no body, no sect was prepared to resist the compact force that moved and thought as one man. Implicit, fanatical obedience to a Dictator is the secret of its irresistible power."

"And implicit obedience still exists?"

My companion opened his lips to reply, but was checked by a sudden influx of a motley crowd into the street. They poured into it from every avenue—men and women and children. The red jersey and the hideous sun-shade bonnets were everywhere. There was no beauty, save the beauty of a ragged variety among the people.

On the face of one and all was a set smile, the Army's sign of happiness, which my companion told me in a whisper Pope Booth the Third had commanded them to wear whenever they walked abroad.

Some of the men carried banners with legends inscribed thereon, such as "The Devil is dead," "When the Pope speaks let no dog bark," "The World is under the heel of the Army," and so on.

At least four-fifths of the women had tambourines, and methought that the jingling they made would not have been unpleasant if one could have been far aloft—in a balloon, let us say. But, being in their immediate neighbourhood, the sound was far from musical.

A roar and a parting of the people, caused by a number of Marshals of the Army riding by on horseback. Behind them a host of men and women mingled, walking six abreast, shouting, laughing, singing.

Brass bands, with cheek-swollen men pouring out deafen-

ing strains—tunes mingled—a jumbling of melody—wild cries of "Hallelujah"—frenzy everywhere—a torrent of half-maddened people, and then—the King.

I saw him, a man in his early prime, standing in a common waggon, and I judged that it was one part of the creed of Pope Booth to teach Kings humility.

Around the Monarch, proud but sad, stood a ring of women—Hallelujah lasses—rattling their tambourines; plain creatures to be sure, and well chosen to keep the royal heart sound and strong. No man or woman did the Monarch reverence.

And so he went by—to do homage to the quickly-grown great social, political, and religious power. Behind him, a torrent of people closing in upon the *cortège* as it passed. All went with it—the street was emptied, and I was left alone with my companion.

"Whither are they going?" I asked. "To St. Paul's?"

"No—that is now the Chief Clothing Emporium for the Army," he said. "The Pope holds his court in Olympia. It is the creed of the Army to despise the beautiful and encourage the hideous. Would you go thither?"

"Ay! readily," I replied.

"Come, then," he said, as he took my hand. "We must hasten if we would be in time."

Around the monarch stood a ring of Hallelujah lasses.

CHAPTER II.

THE KING'S HUMILIATION.

In a moment, as it seemed to me, I found myself in Olympia, a huge, plain building of iron and glass, endowed with space, but with little else to recommend it. From end to end it was crowded with the hosts I had seen in the street—an unlovely mass of hideously-clad women and red-jerseyed men.

At the upper end, upon a raised daïs, sat a stout, thick-set man, wearing a scarlet robe, and a head-dress of the class I have seen in pictures of the Popes of Rome. Around him, at the back, stood an ill-formed semi-circle of officers of the Army—men and women jumbled together without attempt at anything like harmonious arrangement.

Stretched above his head was a canopy, on which was emblazoned the motto of the Prophet Booth—

"*Do as you are told, and don't argufy.*"

Indeed, as I glanced around from an elevated position my companion had obtained for me—how I know not—I saw this motto everywhere.

In frames and hung upon the walls, written in chalk, painted in red upon the iron columns and girders. It was clear to me that this motto was esteemed of much importance by the Pope, and no pains were spared to fully impress it on the people.

A rattle of tambourines, and all rose but the Pope. He sat with twinkling eyes, and one hand resting on a velvet-covered pedestal before him.

I now observed that that hand was covered with a glove of golden thread, save for the thumb, which was bare, and extended so as to be easily seen.

Another flourish of tambourines, and enter the King—alone.

No court, no attendants behind—nothing to show that he was aught more than any other servant of his Holiness.

A dead silence fell upon the vast concourse. The King, with humbled mien, advanced to the pedestal and, bending down, *kissed the bare thumb.*

Then he sank upon one knee, and the Pope, rising, removed his glove and extended his arms as if to bless him. I could look upon the scene no more, and touching my companion on the arm, we hurried out.

"And it has come to this—in sixty years?" I said.

"Man is but man all the world over," replied my companion. "Power is an intoxicating thing, and under its influence strange pranks are played. A heavy yoke is upon the people, but they will not bear it long. However, I must not speak of these things as yet. Whithe go ye?"

"With you if I may," I replied.

An uneasy look came into his eyes.

"I have to meet some friends—private friends," he muttered; "and yet, methinks, I can trust you."

He looked at me wistfully.

I assured him he would find no enemy in me, and the look of mistrust melted away.

"Come," he said.

We walked together through many streets, all silent and deserted. My companion told me that the people had gathered in or near Olympia in obedience to the command of the Pope.

"Some are in hiding," he added, with a shy glance in my direction. "And it is said that many thousands, who in their hearts deny this man allegiance, are skulking here and there to-day."

By this time I was athirst; and as it had been my habit to drink a glass of mild ale when I needed it, I looked around me for some inn or respectable public-house. But I saw none.

Remarking on this to my companion, he told me that there were no *open* drinking places for the sale of intoxicating liquors in the country. I was amazed thereat, and marvelled why I had not heard of this before.

"What has become of the great brewers?" I asked.

"Dead, or in prison, and their estates confiscated for the benefit of the children of deceased drunkards."

"They might be put to a worse use than that," I remarked.

"There are whispers," said my companion, quietly, "of the funds being misappropriated. Heavy salaries are paid to the officers who are high in favour with the Pope. They say, too, that fourth-fifths of the children receiving the benefit of the charity are not the children of deceased drunkards, but the offspring of living members of the Army."

"The charities of the last century suffered from abuse," I said. "But what of the publicans?"

"All banished to the recently-discovered North Pole, there to expiate their sins as purveyors of destruction to the people," replied my companion. "And, again, it is said that many a man goes thither who is not a publican, but simply obnoxious to the Pope."

"As like as not," I said. "Well, as no drink is to be had I will fall back upon an old friend—a cigar. There may be a tobacconist handy."

"Nay," interposed the old man; "the tobacconists went with the publicans. One great manufacturer of tobacco has been publicly whipped for ignoring the Papal edict against the manufacture and sale of tobacco in any form. It scared the rest. You see, no man can enter the Army if he drinks or smokes, and as all are commanded to enter the Army the tabooed trades had to give way."

"And if a man not a tobacconist or a publican refuses to enter the Army—what then?"

"He is either imprisoned or banished, and there is talk of a few heretics being burned as a check against growing signs of rebellion against his Holiness. But here we are. Follow me, and do not speak unless you are addressed by one of the members of the Band of the New Reformation."

CHAPTER III.

A MEETING OF DISSENTERS.

My companion tapped lightly upon the door three times. After a short delay it was opened a few inches, and somebody within said—

"The word?"

To which, in response, my companion whispered—

"Reformation!"

Immediately the door was thrown open and we entered.

In the passage stood a tall young fellow, whose appearance suggested an athlete of one of the Universities as I had known them in my youth, and this, notwithstanding the fact that he was wearing a red jersey, on which was embossed the familiar but, to me, always terrible motto, "Blood and Fire."

"I beg your pardon, my lord," he said; "we did not expect you to-day."

"I have brought a friend with me," my companion answered.

The young athlete, who by this time had closed and barred the door, led the way to the back of the house, where he opened another door, showing the way to a cellar.

Descending about a dozen steps, I found myself in an underground place, about fifteen feet long and twelve wide, from which all daylight had been carefully excluded.

In the centre was a table, around which about a dozen men were seated, with one at the head, who acted as president or chairman.

A small lamp was hanging from the ceiling, and by its weird, imperfect glare I was able to see the faces of those assembled.

They were a mixed body, as I judged—bankrupts in purse, if thread-bare clothing is any guide to that condition, and clericals of various denominations.

I could have gone round and laid a finger on each, saying to one, "You are a Bishop," to another, "You are a Dean," to a third, "You are a shining light among the Baptists," to a fourth, "The Congregationalists own you for a mainstay," and so on.

Church and Dissent were pretty evenly represented—drawn together, as it seemed to me, into close brotherhood by the bonds of oppression.

My guide motioned for me to take a seat at the lower end of the table, at the same time suggesting the need of silence on my part.

Unheeded, but heeding all that passed, I sat still and silent, listening to an earnest debate on the condition of the country.

The president arose and thus addressed those around him—

"Brethren, we have this day witnessed a scene that has made my heart burn within me—the humiliation of our beloved young King. What Rome was in the middle ages, England, this empire, is to-day. It is enslaved, held fast in the grip temporal under the guise of the grip spiritual. It is no marvel that it should be so, for man is but man, and we are not here to condemn him who rules us with a rod of iron, but to find out what road will lead us again to freedom of conscience. Freedom of the body is in the hands of other men. Mark the evolution of the Head of the Army.

"Booth the First, an honest, self-denying man, possessed of great administrative power, absolute, wise and just, doing good, raising thousands from the slough of misery and vice, in error made the law of his people, 'Do as you are told and don't argufy.' Booth the Second, earnest and well-meaning, desirous of following in the footsteps of his father, but like him resolved on being *absolute*. The Army growing in numbers, and drawing all sorts of men into its vortex, and all streams of charity bearing into the one channel which flows into the coffers of the organisation. The motto of the family strengthened by time—no dissent, no argument allowed in the ranks, obedience in all things spiritual and temporal enforced. The *Army a political power*, ruling as one man, guided by one man—filling the House of Parliament with Salvationists—the Lords abolished, the Church disestablished, all other denominations with a sense of growing absorption chilling them. India, Europe—the whole world permeated with the New Religion, swelling like some huge bubble blown by irresistible force out of the mouth of a volcano.

"Booth the Third," here the president lowered his voice to little above a whisper, "lacking many of the qualities of his predecessors, not made of the stern stuff without which ambition may lead to chaos, inflated with pride, has been borne away on the shoulders of a quickly-grown supremacy into the dark region of tyranny. All things in the grasp of the Salvation Army, *which no longer saves*. Home, dress, food, all chosen for the people. A crusade against all things beautiful. To eat sufficient, and to sleep with a roof over one's head, the highest worldly thoughts encouraged. All others declared by Booth the Third to be rank heresy. Salvation books, Salvation papers, Salvation clothes, Salvation boots, linen—all things to be of the Salvation type—and those who will have none of them to go hungry and barefoot. Sixty years ago the wise men, such as Stead, foresaw great possibilities for the general's offspring—and see how their visions have been falsified! A monster, octopus-like, throws out huge tentacles on every side—grasping all things—holding all things but our inmost thoughts. Brethren, how long shall these things be?"

The passion of the man was fearful. He was moved to the very centre. He quivered like the leaves of an aspen tree as he concluded and resumed his seat. Half-a-dozen speakers arose and a confusion of tongues ensued.

While endeavouring to unravel their mingled utterances, I felt a finger laid upon my arm, and turning, saw the young athletic doorkeeper behind me.

"You are to come with me," he said, and rising, I followed him from the house.

CHAPTER IV.

A SAVED CITY.

"It is cool and quiet here," he said, as we reached the street, "very different to the heated atmosphere below."

"Heated more by the words of the speaker than aught else," I replied. "But tell me, was not his statement an exaggeration?"

"It is a question I expected you would ask," he returned, "and I will answer it by showing you some things in this changed city."

I asked him what name he bore and, smiling, he said—

"Call me Baliol, for I was educated in the college of that name, and would fain do honour to its memory."

"Is it a departed thing?" I asked.

"Ay!" he said, "the two great Universities are now given over to the use of the invalids of the Army—men and women who have fallen out of the ranks fainting by the way. All such who have their weakness thus marked are treated as lunatics. It is part of the creed of Booth, that those who have not the strength to be good are insane."

"Then verily," I said, "a huge proportion of the population is in need of confinement."

"But a vast number of the lunatics," said Baliol, "are cunning enough to conceal their malady. You may know them by their furious beating of drums, wild rattle of tambourines, and loud proclamations of having no thought of aught save the Army. Like the Queen in the play, they do protest too much. She did it to hide her frailty; they do it to conceal their weakness."

Talking thus, we came to a spot which I recognised as Piccadilly, but changed—as all things were that I had as yet beheld. The fashionable hosiers exhibited red jerseys,

DO AS YOU ARE TOLD
AND DONT ARGUFY

Pope Booth III. blessing King Albert Victor II.

socks, and other garments, all with the Army brand in the most prominent places. The Egyptian Hall had become a barracks. No carriage, cab, or omnibus, or horses were in the streets, and none could have told by the garments of the people whether they were in the east or west of the great metropolis.

Red jerseys and Hallelujah bonnets swarming, with here and there a skulker among men wearing ordinary attire.

I observed that such were jostled by the Army men and made no complaint, but bore the insult with meekness, save in one case, when a man who had been roughly pushed ventured to reprove the offender.

He was immediately surrounded by half-a-score women rattling tambourines over his head, and screaming out dreadful allusions to his sinful life, and declaring he was "lost!"

From this onslaught he escaped by diving under the arm of one of the maidens and bolting down a narrow way, so that he was lost to view.

Scarce had he gone when another turmoil in an opposite direction attracted my attention.

Surrounded by a body of men in the Army uniform was a pretty girl of some eighteen years. Her attire consisted of a simple dress with some tasteful trimmings and a pretty bonnet.

The men around her were shouting out opprobrious epithets, and calling upon her to come "to the penitent-seat!"

Such a scared little bird she seemed, naught that was brazen about her, but simply desirous—as our foremothers were—to make the best of her beauty.

At length, terrified by their cries, she took off her bonnet, and they trampled it under foot. I saw a wealth of golden hair fall about her shoulders as they hurried her across the road to— Burlington House, surely? No! To all that remained of it.

Denuded of such ornaments as it once possessed, and made hideous with posters calling on the passers-by to step in and be saved.

Another Army barracks in the place of the Home of English Art.

I motioned to Baliol, and we hurried on, and my heart was sick within me, for on all sides was evidence of the beautiful and the ornamental having been destroyed—as sinful things.

At every street-corner there were printed directions to guide the people into the paths of righteousness, and the first lesson taught to one and all was obedience to Pope Booth the Third.

Especially were the people commanded to eschew all things tending to vanity, and as I turned from reading one of these adjurations, to which Baliol called my attention, the blare of many trumpets and the beating of many drums fell upon my ears.

Then came riding by a man in a gorgeous uniform that called to my mind a picture I had once seen of Murat. The charger he bestrode was a magnificent creature, and no prince was ever more haughty in his mien.

"One of the Pope's most powerful Marshals," said Baliol; "one of many. They swarm about the land, and are the living embodiment of the Spirit of Intolerance."

CHAPTER V.

THE CITY AT NIGHT.

"It will soon be night," said Baliol, as we strolled down Oxford-street an hour later. "What will you do in the hours of darkness?"

"I am weary of serious things," I replied, "and long for an hour in some place where there is amusement of some sort—"

Baliol interrupted me with a hearty laugh, which sounded strange to my ears. It was so unlike anything I had heard that day.

"By my life," he said, "you will have to wander far to find what YOU would call amusement."

"The theatres," I hinted.

"Closed ten years ago, and every actor who refused to join the penitents banished."

"A concert-room, then."

"There is no singing or playing in public, save that of the Army."

"Is there nothing to break up the deadly monotony of this life?" I desperately asked.

"Nothing that is open to the eye," returned Baliol, "but you may trust me to show you something that will interest if it does not amuse you."

As he spoke darkness seemed to come suddenly upon us, and the night was there. With it was heard a ringing of bells from various quarters, and Baliol told me that it was done for the good of the people—a signal to retire from the streets, the faithful seeking their homes as soon as the night arrived.

"Only the patrols are supposed to be abroad," he said, "and they are commanded to arrest all stragglers. Ah! there is some rare sport for them chasing the undutiful soldiers of the Army and heretics."

There was no lighting up, as I had known it in my youth, but from the summit of high public buildings and monuments the glare of the electric light sprang out. Weird indeed were the streets—so brilliant in the glare, so deep in the shadow.

The people melted away like insects who shun the

light, and in a little while Baliol and I were alone, standing in a deep shadow by Tottenham-court-road.

We remained there for awhile until the beating of a drum announced the coming of a patrol—some fifty men, who carried staves wherewith to beat the unfaithful, and these they thrust into shady corners as they passed to ascertain if any defiant citizen were skulking there.

But somehow they passed us by, and crossing the road, we hastened down a broad way, and presently paused by the door of a house, wherein all seemed still and dark.

"We will enter here," said Baliol.

The door opened with a touch and we went in, and passed down a passage to a room at the back. The door was locked, but Baliol had a key with which he opened it.

A dozen men were there, engaged in gambling, and we stood aside to watch them. They paid no heed to us, at which, as I had done more than once that day, I marvelled.

At intervals one of their number went out of the room and returned in a little while with some drink in a rude kind of loving-cup, which was hastily passed round and emptied.

Suddenly there was an alarm of a patrol going by, and the cards and dice were hastily gathered together and thrust into a cupboard in a corner of the room. Then all began to sing at their loudest an Army song.

"It is death or banishment," said Baliol, "to partake of strong drink or gamble, but the prohibition has simply driven open vice and folly into secret corners. Nay more, it has made votaries of both of men who cared little for such things before."

"But these are few," I urged. "What are they among so many?"

"Within the heart of this great city alone," said Baliol, "there are ten thousand such dens as this. The good that the first Booth did by persuasion has more than been undone by force. Come, let us go on."

He led me from place to place, and showed me many strange and painful things. Without, in the streets, all was quiet—behind the walls was a vast mass of corruption. It was hideous, horrible, to see the many secret ways of vice, and among the most earnest votaries of it were men who trebled their sin by wearing the garb of sanctity, the uniform of the Pope.

No class, it seemed, was exempt—among the highest and the lowest unspeakable things were done.

Secret stills, distilling liquor, were in every street; the forbidden tobacco was indulged in places not easy of access by the patrol; women flaunted in meek attire—the same old story of man and woman's sin, *intensified by a tyrant legislation.*

In my earlier days, when the blood ran hotly in my veins, I had seen much of the seamy side of life, but never aught like this. So pure and white without, so dark within, were these abodes of men—miles and miles of whited sepulchres with a sprinkling of houses where the truly faithful dwelt.

For, mark you, ALL were not given over to the ways of Evil. Among the hosts were many of the faithful believers in the Spirit which governed the first ruler of the Army, and true to him who now governed them because they hoped that Spirit was in him too.

I grew weary of these scenes, and would have fain retired, but Baliol said he had one more place to show me, which on no account could be passed by. He took me by the hand, and in a moment we were there.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FAITHFUL REBELLIOUS.

A ROOM in one of the outbuildings of Olympia. In it some half-dozen men were assembled, all attired as Marshals of the great Army.

Grave, earnest men these, with sorrowful eyes, sitting in solemn council together.

One was speaking as we glided into their presence and stood aside to listen.

"Brother soldiers," he was saying, "dark times have fallen upon us. The world is again triumphant. Our Head thinks more of temporal power than of the spiritual welfare of the people. Marked you him to-day as our King bent the knee before him? How his eyes glistened and his body swelled with pride! Oh! pitiful sight. And he is not content."

"What asks he for now?" enquired another, a white-bearded, venerable old man, who had been a boy-soldier, so Baliol told me, under the first Booth.

"He meditates calling on all the Kings of the earth to do him homage," was the sorrowful reply, "and now he is preparing edicts to command them to recognise his Infallibility, and to fill his coffers by taxing their people. Even as this land is now well within his hand, so he would have ALL. He seeks to be the Temporal Ruler of the world."

"He has the masses with him," said a third, "for they have been taught to look to him for all things. He governs Parliament, commerce, and the social life. What he says is to be—must be, and that which he says shall not be is put aside. And who dare say aught to the contrary? Have we not ALL to do as we are told, and not argufy? We have naught of our own—our lives, our consciences are in his keeping. And how long, I ask, shall these things be?"

The speaker paused, and, raising his hand, brought it down heavily upon the table and resumed—

"Liberty of mind and body is *dead!* The Army was an eddy at first—it is now a whirlpool, drawing all men and things into its centre. And what are now the chief agents of its power? Ambitious men, who have made this new Christian body a stepping-stone to high positions. Who are its supporters? A few that are zealous, and hosts of those dependent on its bounty."

"Aye! there's the rub," interposed another of the Marshals. "When Booth the First conceived his great plan of providing homes for all that would work, he did not see that the end would be to destroy the energy and self-reliance of the people. Look at the great workshops throughout the land—offspring of the first the General endowed with money subscribed by a charitable public. Look at them, I say—filled with men and women who *half*-work, who *dribble through the labour of the day*, just earning their bread and no more; lazily contented with their lot, without any great earthly hope; void of ambition, seeking neither to raise themselves nor their offspring; sufficient for the day suffices for them; the New State must take care of them on the morrow."

A rapid debate ensued, from which I learnt that the country was growing poorer. There was more evenness in the social state; but the level was a low one, save with a few—leaders of the Army and men in high places, who were favourites of the Pope.

Then, in a whisper, they talked of a New Reformation, of a rebellion against the absolute power of the man who was the real Head of the State, and in the midst of a quiet, earnest discussion I left them.

CHAPTER VII.

DRUMMED OUT.

It was day again, and it seemed to me that some time had elapsed since I walked with Baliol and saw the Holy City under the cover of darkness. But what had happened in the time I could not tell.

Let it suffice that it was high noon and I was in Cheapside, strolling along.

A great multitude were abroad—hurrying to and fro—with eager faces, some stopping here and there to exchange a word or two with other wayfarers.

The windows were filled with sight-seers, mostly women—some pretty enough, perchance, in face and form, but all hideous to the eye, thanks to the orthodox bonnet and sombre, sack-like dress.

I marvelled at the scene, wondering if the King were again about to visit his Holiness the Pope, and, to satisfy myself, I stopped a passer-by and questioned him.

"What!" he exclaimed, "know you not that the seven Marshals who dissented to the Infallibility of the Pope are this day to be drummed out of the Army?"

I was fain to express my ignorance of the impending humiliation of those who had dared to dissent from the Church of Booth.

"They have done so," continued my informant, "and you will see them carried by on their way to the big pillory for heretics in Smithfield."

Anon I saw the offenders pass in a waggon.

I stood aside, and anon I saw the offenders pass in a waggon, with their hands fastened behind them, and the buttons and facings removed from their uniforms.

Behind the waggon were a score or so of drummers, who beat their instruments furiously without time or tune, and a flood of rabble followed, hooting and howling as rabbles are wont to do when opportunity offers for the offensive exercise of their lungs.

Every indignity that tongue could pour out was heaped upon these men. The males hissed or roared, the women at the windows shrieked and rattled tambourines. "Death to the Heretics!" was cried on every side.

And the seven men bore it all unmoved. If they looked at the seething crowd it was with pity; when struck with a stone, or some other popular street missile, they smiled.

On their faces rested a light such as historians record has been seen on the faces of martyrs. I knew these

men. They were part of the body who in secret council had demurred to the growing arrogance of the Pope.

The fruit of that meeting was open dissent, and here was their reward.

I followed these men, and beheld them placed side by side in a huge pillory for every thoughtless fool or vicious ruffian to pelt with refuse and abuse.

And freely was the right of the public exercised. It was high holiday for all the rabble of the town—a carnival for hot-blooded, unthinking fanatics. Sickened, I turned from the scene and strode away.

And as I walked I marked that there were many gloomy faces in the street.

Men looked ashamed at each other, and some started and trembled if only the hand of a friend was laid upon them.

I noted also two or three men with faces stern, wandering about, occasionally stopping a passer-by to speak one word to him and pass on.

Whoever was thus spoken to turned from his course and hurried west.

I, too, went that way until I came to the Marble-arch, through which from every direction streams of men were pouring.

They all bore in the direction of the Reformers'-tree, under whose branches sedition had been spouted before against rulers who were *not* tyrants, but served the people well. A vast multitude had already assembled, and I, urged by my curiosity, was about to join them when the rattle of drums fell upon my ears, and I saw a great body of the Army—picked men, as it seemed to me—who fell upon the crowd with sword and bayonet and rifle, slaying right and left, and driving the terrified people like chaff before the wind.

Some stood stubbornly against the onslaught, and were cut down, dying with the word "Heretic!" or "Unbeliever!" hissed in their ears. It was a fearsome, bloody scene, and, overcome by the sight, I swooned away.

An old man was digging in the garden.

CHAPTER VIII.

A DAY IN THE COUNTRY.

In the country now (how transported thither I know not), seated by the window of a cottage upon a hill commanding a view of one of the fairest spots in southern England.

Just by the window an old man was digging in the garden, and I saw branded on the handle of the tool the words "Salvation Spade." There were also some words too small for me to read, which I judged then to be a text.

This was no cause for surprise, for I knew that the word of much import to us all was on all things. It was the trade-mark of the Pope, and without it nothing was genuine. To trade in that which was not approved of was heresy, and punishable by the law of the Army.

The law of the land was dead.

With one stroke of the pen his Holiness had abrogated all laws but such as he made, and given one simple guide to the people—

"Do as you are told and don't argufy."

I could not call to mind who told me of these things, but as I sat by the window I knew that they had been done. Nay, more. I knew also that the great word of need on which the Army had been founded had lost its power among the people. Familiarity had at least bred indifference. With Salvation hats, boots, shoes, clothes, liveries, and everything in common use, what could be expected? Musing on the knowledge of these things, I watched the old man until he was aroused from his labour, by a youth in the uniform of a private of the Army.

"Friend Michael," he said, sternly, "you have not your jersey on."

The old man pleaded the heat of the day, at which the young man laughed.

"Heat and cold, light and darkness," he said, "are nothing to us, for they are of this world. It is the command of his Holiness that all men shall have some outward and written sign of belonging to the faithful. Do as you are told, and don't—"

The old man cast down his spade, and picking up a red jersey from the ground, struggled into it, muttering something, of which I heard fragments, and judged they were not loving messages to the Pope.

The young man, with a warning word for Michael not to be caught again without his jersey, on pain of being reported to the Vigilance Committee, passed on, and then the old man turned to me and said—

"You see the life we lead. There is no hole or corner safe from the prying of these people. They pester us abroad, they invade our homes, they haunt us everywhere; but mark ye, sir, *not for long*. We shall not wait centuries this time for a Reformation, for these old eyes of mine will see it."

I did not make a verbal reply, but there must have been something in my look that sufficed for it, and he went on.

"It will not this time be the work of a King to serve his lustful turn, for our monarch, albeit not a great man, is a good one. The blow will come from the people, who wait in hosts for a Cromwell—for a leader."

"Surely you mean a Garibaldi?" I said, "for he it was who destroyed the temporal power of the Pope of Rome."

"Well, call him what you will," said the old man, "so that he be the leader of the people to freedom. There never was such a tyranny as this born of a promise to set the people free. The first Booth—when I was but a young man—gained the ear of one Stead. Mayhap you have heard of him?"

I nodded assent.

"He was a leader of the people, and had a vast following. Booth the Righteous, as you may know, the first was called, gained his ear, and filled it with schemes for the salvation of the bodies and souls of men. He asked for power—money—and by the aid of Stead and others he obtained it. So he set about and laboured, and there was much blossom and a great promise of fruit.

"Mark ye," said the old man, leaning on his spade and gazing fixedly at me, "in the hands of a man like the General the fruit would have been *good*; but he did not live to see it gathered in. The Army grew in riches and in power, but *its rulers weakened*. Their heads would not stand the intoxicating power they inherited. The strong, guiding hand has become the clenched fist of the tyrant. Instead of being led we are—Heaven help us!—driven."

So it was everywhere, this tyrant power. A young church grown rapidly corrupt; its mission perverted; its strength used for the aggrandisement of a few leaders, and not for the people. The history of Rome repeated.

And while the old man was talking I heard shouting afar off, and I saw a body of men marching along the high road.

They were rudely armed with scythes, sledge-hammers, and old-fashioned guns, and at the head of them walked a man bearing a red cap fixed upon the top of a pole.

"Did I not tell you so?" cried the old man, exultingly. "The hour has come! The signal has been given! From every quarter of this Booth-ridden land bands of brave men are bearing down upon Olympia. They go to fight and win freedom or—a grave!"

He tore off his red jersey and trampled it under foot. Then, seizing his spade, he hurried after the retiring band.

I lingered for awhile, debating within my mind whether I would go or remain there, and was disturbed in my meditations by the entrance of a fair young girl.

She was engaged in tearing one of the hideous Army bonnets to pieces.

"Why do you, a man, linger here?" she said. "Go and do your share of releasing us from the iron rule of the Hideous. Fight to restore Beauty to the land. Bring back to us sweet music and away with the deafening drum and the childish tambourine. Bring back the quiet faith of our forefathers, and banish hysteria. Give us again attire becoming to the form with which we are endowed. Put an end to the enforced scarecrow apparel for sweethearts, wives, and daughters—"

I staved no longer, but, rising hurriedly, left the house and ran after the band of men, who were now mere specks in the distance.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FALL OF THE POPE.

I COULD not overtake those who had gone before. Making all the speed in my power did not lessen the specks, but I could see that they were gathering fast.

I passed by many lonely houses which were closed, but anon I came to a village where there were a few women and children standing by the doors.

The street was strewn with torn uniforms and other insignia of the Army. The women and children clapped their hands as I went by.

"Down with the Pope!" shrilly cried an urchin of five, and the women shrieked with laughter.

Fixed upon a wall on the outskirts of the village was a huge placard, on which was inscribed the one law of his Holiness—"Do as you are told and don't argufy." It was torn here and there and defaced in many places—such a thing I had not seen before, for no sacrilegious hand had ever been laid upon anything that emanated from Olympia.

I travelled miles, and reached at last one of the suburbs of the great city. I knew not which it was, nor did I

stay to enquire, for that, too, was deserted by men, and only women and children were to be seen. No conveyance was in sight, but I cared not for that, feeling no sense of fatigue.

The sign of renouncement of the Army and its works was everywhere. Fierce denunciations of the Pope were chalked upon the walls. From afar the sound of many thousand voices floated towards me.

I grew eager to reach Olympia, fearing the work would be done ere I reached the spot. From the spectator I had suddenly been transformed to the partisan. I burned to be one among the assailants of the tyrant's stronghold.

I bounded along, like one endowed with unearthly activity. I flew on, with my mind in a whirl and a chaos of strange cries in my ears.

And then in a moment all was clear again, and I was in the midst of a surging throng. Ahead of me was a young man held aloft upon the shoulders of the people.

It was Baliol, with a sword in his hand. I heard his voice urging the people to be free—or die.

And what a motley assemblage there was around him!

It was no ordinary street mob, but a gathering of men of the middle and upper classes—merchants, tradesmen, bishops, clergy and curates, ministers of every denomination, who had been despoiled and were now seeking the downfall of the despoiler.

About a hundred yards down the street I saw Olympia, surrounded by a mass of red-jerseyed men, with a fringe of women wearing the Army bonnet.

They were leaping up, shrieking "Hallelujah!" rattling tambourines, beating drums, and waving weapons in the air. A wall of fanatics intervened between the people and the home of the Pope.

As yet there was no fighting, for the besieging hosts were loth to make these innocent men and women the victims of their wrath.

The foremost urged upon them to give way, promising them that nothing worse than banishment should befall their Head.

But the women only shrieked "Hallelujah!" and the men got ready to fight.

A shot was fired.

I saw the smoke of it from an opening on the level of the galleries of Olympia, and Baliol clapped his hand to his left arm.

The shot had been fired at him. He was hit.

A mighty roar rose up from the besieging people, and with irresistible force they bore down upon the devoted few, who, men and women alike, fought nobly, and when they fell died with "Hallelujah!" on their lips.

They were the children of the Army of the first Booth, who fought against the sin and darkness of their time, winning great battles, ignoring persecution, and earning the good will of many wise and thoughtful men.

But their numbers were few, and they could not resist the mighty force brought against them. The greater part of the army had fled. Corrupt Marshals, venial Officers, half-hearted men of the ranks had fled by their tens, hundreds, and thousands. Only a devoted few, blind to the errors of their Head, fought and died for a lost cause.

The defenders were scattered, the doors broken in, and the victims poured through into the huge hall. And then came chaos.

I know not how to describe it, for it seemed to me that my vision took in many things at once. A proud man in pontifical robes, fleeing to a strong, small fort just without Olympia, attended by a few of his surviving followers—a treasury broken into and a general scramble for its contents, in which even *good* men joined—blows exchanged—bloodshed, turmoil, and confusion on every side.

Some cried aloud for the life of the Pope, but there were strong men in the crowd, who, though they loved him not, stood between him and his foes. The majority of the latter but yesterday were outwardly his friends.

"Let him see to the spiritual welfare of those who believe in his teaching," the strong men cried, "but the temporal power we take from him—*for good and all.*"

The angry mob still demanded that he should not only be deposed, but crushed, destroyed, and fighting was resumed. But the strong men prevailed.

From the interior of Olympia to the street was an easy transition for me, and then I saw that reaction had set in.

The insignia of the Army were disappearing. Men were tearing off their uniforms and rending them to shreds. Busy hands tore down or defaced the edicts of the Pope. The numerous barracks were invaded by howling mobs, who destroyed all things within their reach. There was drinking everywhere. Every man, as it seemed to me, had his pipe ready for the hour of freedom. There was shouting and laughter on every side.

It was not a pretty sight, but it has been ever thus in this world. The straight-laced Puritans' dictatorship gave way to the lewd monarchy. Humanity, like a pendulum pushed aside, when let go will swing far in the opposite direction, and many a movement to and fro takes place ere it is quiet again.

There was much drinking, open vice on every side, leavened, be it said, with a fair sprinkling of good men and women, who went about beseeching the mad people to be still.

At every street-corner there was an orator, who, for good or ill, utilised the hour of freedom to give vent to the thoughts which had been stifling within him for

years. But few listened. The first hour of freedom was given up to pleasure. There was dancing in the streets—music and mirth everywhere. As I listened my brain became confused—all things grew misty before my eyes—they faded out—and I awoke, to find 'twas but a dream!

. . . . . .

A dream! No more! But some dreams come true. Wealth is pouring into the coffers of General Booth, and he cries yet for more. Give him the million he asks for, and anon he will want more—then more and more.

Let the wise, the thoughtful, and the benevolent pause ere they put too much power into the hands of those who are welding together a mass of humanity, mostly of the lowest type, to be shaped this way and that as the Head directs. The rule of the Army is autocratic. They have to obey, or are virtually crushed. *No member of it is a free agent.* The fears of the ignorant are played upon, and the masses are bribed with promises of temporal advantages to come out of following the teaching of the English Madhi. Think of the rapid formation of this body, and what it will be in another generation, unless its rising is checked.

All other religious denominations will be driven to the wall, all other channels of charity dried up, and the freedom of society at large imperilled. There is no ruling power so severe, so relentless, as the iron hand of fanaticism, and it has never shown its head more clearly than it does to-day in this strange hysterical organisation.

Given a continual increase in the strength of this body and the very heart of this nation will be taken away. It is Socialism in its most dangerous form that is now about to be attempted if the public will only find the funds.

Give any man *a small certainty* and he will in nine hundred and ninety cases out of a thousand *drift* on without ambition. "The poor we have always with us," and too much cannot be done to raise the unfortunates from a low level; but do not let the power to do so remain in one body, which, working honestly now, may in the future have other aims than finding food for one's body and salvation for his soul.

The Roman Church was not autocratic at its birth, but with increasing power it became so. We have only to read the history of the Middle Ages to understand what it did and what it attempted to do. Man is but man in whatever age he moves. Booth the First, we will grant, is a self-denying, conscientious man, but he cannot hand down these qualities to his successors. Ambition of the worldly sort will sooner or later step in, and a trammelled people, bound down by iron laws temporal and spiritual, will then look back upon the past and ask themselves what manner of men we were to allow the tentacles of a One Man Power to lay hold of all things.

Let the "General" stick to his first idea—teaching men sobriety and the need of purity; but when he enters into the arena of Socialism and coolly asks for millions wherewith to work out his aims, it is time for all men to pause and think. Darkest England is dark enough now, but it may become darker by-and-bye.

The times were changing for the better before the Army reared its head of "Blood and Fire." The regeneration of man cannot be effected in a day. Hysteria is an ephemeral thing. The blowing of brass instruments pleases the ears of the multitudes, uniforms charm the eyes of the masses, but when we see behind all this there is a spreading *absolute* power it is time for those who have higher ways and thoughts to take the field in self-defence.

There is no time to be lost. The work of Charity—true Charity, that will be a lasting benefit to the poor without being injurious to the general community—can, and must, go on, but it ought not to be in one man's hands.

If the day should come—and as things are it seems to be fast approaching, when all the hopes of the needy are placed on *one source*—then that source will be the ruling power of the country. You may, at first, smile at this idea, but less probable suggestions have been laughed at, derided, and in the end come true.